

Ellen Rawlings
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Interviewed by: Elaine Carr

Elaine: I am at the Crossroads Senior Center doing an oral history with Ellen Laris Rawlings. When did your parents first come into the Uinta Basin?

Ellen: My father came from Patros, Greece in 1906. He worked his way from Eliss Island, N.Y. to the Uintah Basin. He landed in Vernal, Utah. He came over from Greece with six other Greek boys. They all lived in a little log house just as you come into Vernal on the left hand side of the road. My dad dated awhile and he met one girl that he thought was quite nice, but because he was Greek, they wouldn't let her marry him.

My mother was an Abplanalp, Edith Abplanalp. She came from a family of nine girls, born to Amanda and George Abplanalp. They lived in Glines ward, a little ways from where my father lived. So later he met my mother; he was several years older than her. They later married. I remember him saying she (my mother) was seventeen and I married someone younger so I could train her the way I wanted.

My mother told me a story about the first time she went to town, after having me. Everybody clustered around the buggy. "Oh, please let us see the baby. We never have seen a Greek baby before." So I guess they thought I'd be some kind of freak. My mother said that her folks didn't shun her, but some of the relatives did. For a long time they (some relatives) wouldn't speak to her, because she married a Greek.

I was born in Vernal in 1916 in that little log cabin and so was my brother. There was just eighteen months between us. Then we moved to Roosevelt.

When my father moved there he had a buggy. He would go around buying hides; he never worked for anyone else. He was a man that worked for himself. He would go around to the farmers in his buggy and he would buy a hide for fifty cents. When his buggy got loaded, he would tie ropes on them and drag them behind. A man by the name of Peter Delamassey would come to town, he was an Italian. He had a farm just out of Roosevelt about where that school house was and that church is now. My dad would buy the hides for fifty cents and sell them for a dollar. That's the way he got started. So then later, when he decided that he wanted to have a few cows, horses, chickens and pigs, he got the idea there was a market for somebody to buy livestock. He knew all the Greek boys down at Carbon County and places like that, so he later built him a slaughter house. It's down across from the cemetery in Roosevelt. He bought property there. Even though he didn't speak good or broken English, I did all his letters and book work and things from the fifth grade on until he got a little more fluent. But, he was very sharp because he figured in his head like two, four, six, eight, ten, twelve, and he never learned to write very well. He'd just scratch C for chicken, and B for beef, but he could carry it all in his head. He was very intelligent.

After High School we moved from the little farm into town so I could go to school. I started school when I was six. He started building a home there and we added onto it. That's where we lived until I got married at nineteen. By then my father had two or three trucks and was hiring people. He would go around and buy cattle during the week and then he'd slaughter them. He

had that slaughter house. He would go to Carbon County and he knew all the Greeks and Italians there. Then, he'd take orders for what he could bring them next time. He also did chicken and turkeys. He hired two men to slaughter for him. He became quite a wealthy man.

Then he opened up a business. It was called the Laris Commission House. It was just across from Gordie Harmston's Café here. He had just been there a short while, he had a little grocery store and he rent it to a man that was welding in the back and it burned down, so he built a brand new building that now stands there. I think it's all car parts now, and that's where he had the Laris Commission House. They would bring chickens in and livestock. It was a big enough building he could keep them there in the crates and then on Wednesdays he would slaughter them and take them to Carbon County. On Wednesdays he would have the chickens killed. He had a coup on the lot and he would pay people to come pick chickens for three cents a chicken. All the kids in town would come pick chickens and then they would make fifteen or twenty five cents. A show was fifteen cents and if they would make a quarter they could get a dish of ice cream for that. I remember my first show, we had a girl here by the name of Lorraine Day. That was her movie star name. That's the only movie star we ever knew. She was just a little girl and her parents taught her and she was a beautiful girl. Finally her mother took her to California and Lorraine Day married Durocher a great baseball player. She was in the movies and everything. I remember the first show hall we had was where the Wells Fargo Bank is now. You could go for an Indian head penny. The penny had just come out. People bought them up and if you have an Indian head penny you could probably get several dollars for it now. We all had an Indian head penny and would go see the movie and it was Lorraine Day in the movie.

I just grew up here and went to school. I always had lots of friends. I was always thinking up something to do. I got a little gang going and we decided to sell hamburgers, at noon, up to the old high school. We did all that kind of stuff. I took about twelve piano lessons and then I'd play a lot by ear.

I got to playing in dances and that is how I met my husband. He played saxophone. We would go around with our little band. There was a drummer, two saxes, and myself. We would make about four or five dollars between us and we would split it. That's when gas was twenty-five cents so it would only cost us fifty cents for gas and if we made four dollars we'd each get a dollar. My light bill was only ninety-two cents.

I started going with Parley when we were in the dance band. We went together seven years, well I was only thirteen when I started playing the piano. And we'd play for dances all over the Basin. Then we finally dated in high school. I spent a year at BYU and on my parents wedding anniversary I married Parley J. Rawlings on November 20, 1935. I was nineteen years old.

We just started playing for dances.

Elaine: Where was the dance halls that you played at?

Ellen: Oh, we'd go to Ballard and play in the church. That's when they were having Gold and Green Balls. We'd get only five dollars for the bunch. There was four of us, we'd maybe make a dollar a piece and a dollar for gas. We would go like to Tabiona, and to Hannah, and to Neola, and to the church here and to Ballard. I even played after I got married at Club Forty. I played drums then. So, that's how we made a little money.

We had two boys, Louis and Shirl. Then I had to have a surgery. I was always going to have a lot of kids but I had to have a surgery. I got cancer and had everything taken out. So we only had the

two boys.

I so wanted to teach my boys to not be race prejudice having been a Greek. They no longer called me Johnny the Greek. So when the church had a placement program we went down to St. George and picked a little Apache boy, Oran Delachio from the Apache's down just across the border in Arizona. So, that little boy come to live with us. It was what I wanted, because one night, my oldest son Shirl had gone to college, but Louis was still home; that's when we had Micky. One night Louis come down and said, "Mom, what's all this fuss about? Micky is just like we are. He's no different. It's only the color of his skin." I said, "I told you Louis. Why do you think I had Micky come to live here? I didn't want to ever have him face being called an Indian and things like that. We're all the same, it's just the color of our skin." And, it's helped my kids all through life. And especially going to college and in their work and they've both been Bishops and Stake President's and things like that.

Elaine: Let's back up and talk about when you were young living with your parents.

Ellen: My dad had two trucks and my mother had the nine sisters and my grandmother and grandfather didn't have a car, never owned a car in their life. They just lived on their little place and had a cow and things like that. So, I loved to dance and so did my dad. He took me to the dances with him when I was twelve. I still dance every Friday in Vernal. He would get his truck and when they'd have dances at the UBIC he would load my mothers' sisters in the back of the truck and I'd get some of my friends and we'd all go to the dance. Then he learned to dance and really enjoyed it. He would sometimes get my mother and would let me go all the time. I was very mature for my age. I developed about in junior high. So, we'd go to dances and my dad would take a couple of my mothers' sisters and me. I was kind of teaching him how to dance. We'd go clear to Helper from Roosevelt. It was only an hour and a half. We'd go there on Friday nights to the Rainbow Rendevous they had in Helper to the dances. So, we danced a lot in our life.

That's when I got to playing the piano and things. My dad was real good to the family. We never were in want for anything in our life. We had things that no one else had, telephones, bathrooms, and furnaces. I was one of the most fortunate women in the world and I still am.

My one brother Clifton was just a little slow. He finally married and he was driving my fathers trucks. My father had these three trucks. One brother drove one and my other brother drove the other one. He went to the mountains up above Lapoint one time and the brakes wouldn't hold on his truck and he was killed. So, I lost the one brother. He had married and had two children. Then his wife got killed in a car accident shortly after that, so for awhile I helped raised those children and then one of them left. But the one girl, Shiela Utley, married and she's quite heavy and has a problem with learning and that so I still help her. She is divorced now and just lives with a son and a daughter. I kind of help care of her.

Then my younger brother married and had five beautiful children. One of them is Diana Rasmussen that worked for Moon Lake here. She is a very beautiful intelligent girl, a Rasmussen from Neola. My brother married Minola Horrocks. When their fifth baby was born, the mother died of cancer. I kept the five children for awhile, then the four got older and went home. They were from a tiny baby to twelve years old. Then my brother married again. But the younger girl is a little slow and I kept her, Rochelle Laris. She lived with me until she married and divorced. But, she's living in her own apartment now. But I still help her. I put her on Social Security,

because the fact that her mother died of cancer and carried her all the time, she has a little trouble with learning and money. I still help take care of her, she's forty six. I have an interesting life.

Elaine: Tell me about your school teachers and your friends.

Ellen: Norma Johnson, Dora Curry, Pearl Labrum, she's still alive. Oh, we had fun. In high school we would support each other. Clele Jacobs and Chink Bingham and oh there was just so many. These were my friends.

My teacher, one of them was Alvin Coombs. I had Mr. Schwanke. He was from the Hawaiian Islands. He was born aristocratically and he left the Hawaiian Islands and came to a little community like Roosevelt to teach. He was a big heavy curly head Samoan. Very intelligent, I loved him as a teacher. He married a girl from here and had a couple of children. I think one of his children went back and become a Lord or something, of one of the Hawaiian Islands. Other teachers were Laura Staver and Mr. Gunn, my seminary teacher.

We had a bunch of girls that we used to get together about two or three times a week and go make candy at each others houses and have sleep-overs and golly I was always having a party. We'd say, "Let's have a party!" We had Miss Green and Miss Staples as our teachers. Four of us decided to have a party one night. We went and got our teachers and took them down here by Ballard and roasted weenies. Just dumb things like that. Then, we'd each bring stuff to school and sell it and put the money in our little club.

I loved to dance and I was playing in Orchestra's then. One night my dad had gone to Price with the other truck and my mom and my brothers were asleep so I decided I wanted to go to the dance so I called my friends and they came and I took my dad's truck. I drove it and went to Ravola. I threw the girls in the back of the truck. We had to go up this way and go down over a hill and I never had driven it before and we had a lot of fun.. We went to Ravola and then brought the truck back, put the keys in his pocket and he never knew I was gone. So I had fun in my life.

My friends and I had a little place called the shack. It was by one of our friends houses where the dad used to store his harnesses. We got him to take the harnesses out. It was Lula Eldridges dad's place. We put in a bed and a stove and took some old records for an old phonograph. We used to go there and have candy pulls and parties. We called it the shack and we'd meet at our shack. I've had fun all my life.

Elaine: The best thing is to have fun in life.

Ellen: Then I went to teaching. I taught twenty three years.

Elaine: Where did you teach? Which schools did you teach at?

Ellen: Roosevelt and then I taught in Alterra, Old Alterra when they had the Alterra High School. I taught high school here in Roosevelt four years and I taught twenty years over in Uintah. I know everyone in Uintah.

Let me tell you an experience I had. When I was teaching, I was teaching fifth grade at Todd School. It was called Old Alterra then, before they had Todd and the high school now. I was teaching fifth grade then, and my money kept disappearing. I finally knew who it was. A little

girl was taking the money. I called her in one day, and I said, "You know I need help. Somebody's been taking my money. Well I have no idea who it is. Why don't you be my guard and help me. I put twenty dollars in my purse in this drawer. You're the only one I trust and you're going to watch it. Now I'm going to go eat lunch and you're going to stay and watch my purse and then I'll come back and you'll go eat lunch." And you know I never took her to the principal. You don't do that. I never reprimanded her or scolded her or anything and she would guard my purse and she never stole another dime. I just had fun in school.

I taught PE. When we were at Alterra up here on the bank, they had a stream running. I remember I told the kids, "Now during lunch hour bring a lunch." I got permission to take them off the school grounds and I said, "Just wear something that you don't care if you get wet, let's go wading." They had that stream all along the road you know and so I got my PE class, we were in our PE clothes and we waded in the stream all the way and had our lunch and come back. We used to have fun. You know what else I'd do with them, squaw wrestle with them, and it just tickled them to death. I just loved everyone I taught. I still do. They'll see me and hug me, "Oh Miss Rawlings, it was so fun, I wish I could go to school again."

Then I owned a gift shop.

Elaine: Tell me about your businesses.

Ellen: When I was teaching at Avalon, everybody said you don't want to go down there. They're not potty trained. I said, "Well I'll go down there and potty train them." And I chose to go to Avalon. One girl, a Rogers girl was over six feet, big tall girl, she was sleeping on a car seat. She had humped over like this, so I took her home, gave her a perm and had her stay all night. I loved her very much.

I had a gift shop and sold it. I had the shoe shop and sold it and then you know the Attic here in Roosevelt, that was my third business. I owned that building for twenty or thirty years. I just sold it a few years ago to the lady that owns it now. My gift shop was down next to the theater. They had two little shops there and my first business was my gift shop there. Then I bought a building, it was a grocery store. I moved the groceries out and put in shoes. Then I wanted to go back and get my degree so I just sold the shoe store and I went back to college. My sister-in-law died then and left five children from twelve to one and a half years old. I had the baby live with me in my home and had my mother tend some and I went to school a year and lived alone. Then I took correspondence courses in between. I graduated with two years of college and the other two years I did correspondence. But I'd go in the summer and I'd take three of those children to live with me. The two older ones I'd leave at home. So I was on campus for three years during the summer until I got my degree. I finally graduated from college.

Then I sold that building just a few years ago that I had the gift shop, the shoe shop and dress shop in. We called it the Attic. My daughter-in-law and I ran it for eighteen years. We'd go to California and Denver to buy. We had women come from Salt Lake to buy our clothes because she would buy for the young and I would buy for the older. I'm still wearing clothes that I had in the Attic. We got the top line. It never pays to go buy anything cheap. I got the top line and still buy the top line because it lasts forever.

Elaine: What about memories of traditions and activities that you did as a family?

Ellen: We always got together at Christmas time. The Abplanalps and the Laris' and all the family would come home. That was when I was growing up. Of course we'd have Santa Claus come. I just couldn't stay in bed. The minute I'd hear him, and they'd go to bed I'd sneak up and wake my oldest brother up. We'd sneak out and go to grandpa's. We just lived a block away. I'd go knock on the door. And he'd come and say, "Dag durn' fools that haven't been to sleep. Mandy and I just got down," and he said, "here go set by the stove." They had a coal stove. He'd take the lid off a little ways and he said, "Don't you wake up the rest of the family." So Clifton and I'd sit there and freeze. Well, one Christmas mom and dad didn't know we'd got up and I made Clifton keep still and we tipped toed out. He got a little car, oh about this big (indicates with hands) that you'd pedal. I got him in it. The roads were rough and we was going to grandma's a block away. I pushed him so hard I broke the pedals. When we got to grandpa's he scolded us and he let us stay, and then we went back home, and the family scolded us because they had to go have his little car fixed up. I'd pushed so hard I broke his pedals. We always got nice Christmas'.

When I got married I had a nice big home. It had eleven rooms and three bathrooms. It was after I married and had my family and that. I would always entertain for Christmas. Everybody came to Christmas to my house. When I'd take care of my brothers kids, Michael Laris, he owns a business a little ways out of town selling electrical fixtures and things like that, and his one daughter works in the hospital here in Roosevelt. She married a Workman. The other daughter, Natalie Workman that just built a brand new beautiful home, we went over there for Christmas dinner this year. The Workman's and Michael Laris owns that. Kathy Laris teaches school. She's been a school teacher for years. My grandfathers sister married a Workman so we're all relation. I remember the one Workman girl invited me over and she made me cry. She's just in her thirties and she just had twins and already had a baby so she has three little children. And, she said, "Do you know why I'm doing this? I can remember all my life the things I looked forward to was Christmas at Aunt Ellen's." And she said, "I decided I want my family to start that tradition." Because, I'd have all my nieces and nephews and my own family come home. I kept the tradition's until I sold my big home in Roosevelt and went to live in a little apartment. My big home was so big, it had eleven rooms and three bathrooms, a big red brick home. Some of the people thought it was a church. Some kids passed one day and said, "Lady, we heard you had witches up in your attic, can we go see them." It's just the block back from the mortuary in Roosevelt. It was too big after my husband died. He died in 1983. I've been a widow since then. I chose not to remarry.

Elaine: I know that you were involved in organizations such as Professional Business Women's Club. Can you tell me about serving on some of those?

Ellen: I think that the biggest award I had was when I competed. I was president of even the Rough Riders, that was the arm of the city. I was the first woman to be on the City Council in Roosevelt since it's inception in 1906. I was there in 1958. I was the only woman that had ever been on a board since 1906. Then twenty years later in 1978 I was on the board the second time with Gordon Harmston and Jay Gates that lives in Vernal. So, I've been that, I've been Relief Society President, taught church classes and others.

I was on the State Board. When they got the vocational college down here, I was one of the board members that helped get the college. I stayed on that board for five years. I would meet with the state. I was also on the State Vocational School Boards. There's twelve vocational

boards in this state. I had to go visit those. I would meet with the mayor or the Cannon's, people like that because I was on the board for the Tri-County. You see those plaques that I have for all three counties; I represented them on the state board. There were several times I went to the Governors mansion and got awards from him like the Club Woman of the Year. That's the one I got from the Governor. I've done everything. I was president of the Professional Business Women, I was over the Vernal area too. I've been on the Tri-county Health Board twenty years with Joseph Shaefer. They put out a magazine one year in my honor and they're the ones that gave me the big plaque, for twenty years of service. I retired two years ago. I was the first woman on the board. I think there's only been one other one. That's on the health board. I was also president of the State Health Board for the technical college.

I've been organist, I've been presidents, I've been teachers, I've been Beehive teacher. When I was a Beehive teacher some of the kids had never been out of Roosevelt. I got my dad's cattle truck and I hadn't driven it before, but I did. I just crept all the way when we went to the mountains, and I didn't know until I got home I should have used the extra gear and took it out of second. So we went to Uinta Mountain and I had all those kids and they'd never been and we stayed at Dr. Miles cabin and had a lot of fun. I've done about everything.

I've had a lot of the kids come and stay at my home, boys and girls that need help. I got a lot of them and got their hair cut. I got a lot of them to shine their shoes. All I'd have to do when I was in the forth grade, oh the kids feet looked awful, because I had them all from over in Leota, Randlett and the little Indian kids. One day a little boy named Ron Cuch came, oh he's a handsome boy now, and I said, "Ron, you got your shoes shined. My Lordie!" The next morning four little boys came, "Mrs. Rawlings, I got my shoes shined." You know, I just loved the kids. Like I said, I taught twenty three years.

They had a contest for the state of Utah not long ago. They ask each community to send in the people that would qualify for it. Do you know Jane Thompson? She's a great great lady. It was for the Total Citizen Award for helping the community and people, (community service). This award was given by the State. I got the award for the State of Utah because I had more activities listed. Jane Thompson got it the first year. We're the only two that got it for the State of Utah. When Roosevelt had the beauty contest at the UBIC, that's where they gave the awards. I didn't know I was getting it. They had talked to my family about it and they had everybody stand up and applaud and yell and it was great and I cried all the way down and all the way back. I got that just a few years ago.

I've held conventions here. We'd never had one here. I was the president of the Business and Professional Women and got state awards for that. I was the state secretary too. I was the state keeper of the books and we would hold our meetings at the State Capital. I'd take some of the Indian kids that does Indian dances and we put on a program for the whole state. That's why I know so many people and I love them. I love everybody.

Elaine: Tell me about some of the people from this area that you have memories of.

Ellen: Well Amanda Abplanalp is my Grandmother, Amanda Wardle Abplanalp. She had a maternity home. Her husband worked with horses and drove the freight. My dad got him to get teams and buggies and they went to Price through Nine Mile. They freighted for Ashton's. My dad started the freighting. No one wanted to go. George Abplanalp and Louis Laris, his name is Alias Lazarus in Greek, they got wagons and a team and they would leave Vernal and go through

Nine Mile and Wellington and then go to Price and meet their train. They'd bring fresh oranges and things like that. My mother said that when my grandfather was doing it, then my dad went with him. They had two teams. All he did was work with his team. He would plow. He helped build Ashley Creek. So did my dad. I still have script that they paid him. He never ever got his money because they didn't have money to pay him.

So my grandfather and dad would take a team of horses and my grandpa's horses were named Fox and Dan. They'd go to Nine Mile to Price and get the groceries.

On Christmas my mother said that her mother used to go out in the field and get the corn cobs. Then, she would peel them down, make faces on them, get the silk for hair, dress them in clothes, make little clothes, and that was what they got for Christmas for a doll. They couldn't even have a doll. That was their dolls. And sometimes my grandmother would make clothes and put on those corn cobs for those girls.

My mother said the first time she ever tasted an orange she got up and got to her stocking and there was an orange there. She was standing on her bed and she just started to bounce. And she said, "Oh Godfries I got an orange." And she bounced so high she fell off the bed and hurt her head. And she said, "I was so tickled, that's the first time I had ever tasted an orange." And she said, "We had never tasted boughten candy." When her dad, George Abplanalp, brought the wagon in that time, he stopped, and the candy came in barrels, and they used to open the barrels and just set them in Ashton's that had the store, not C. I., but the old Ashton's, and grandpa hauled for him. He said he opened the little side and got a little hand full of candy, about fifteen pieces and closed it again. That's the first candy my mother had gotten for Christmas. She was about seven or eight. Isn't it something.

She'd say when they'd go to school, the snow would be so high, sometimes it would crust because we used to have thirty and forty degree winters. They could walk across the fences. They lived up there just as you come into Vernal, Glines. They had that ditch along there and that canal and that's where they were. She said most of them only went to the eighth grade. They didn't even have anything past the eighth grade. So if you went through the eighth grade it was like graduating from college. But, she said sometimes it would crust and sometimes she could walk over the fences to school.

Elaine: What are some of the challenges you have faced in your life?

Ellen: The one thing was the loss of my husband. I've had five chances to remarry. He was burned just one month after we got married on November 20th. Just before Christmas, he was driving truck for my dad and the water had frozen. About two or three hundred feet from our home my dad had a big corral to keep his cattle in. He would get water from the gulch to water his animals. Parley went over and the water was frozen, so he went to my dad's store and got some gasoline and wrapped the pipes. Then he lit a match, but he had spilt some on his clothes and he got burned. We didn't have a hospital then. We were just living with my parents then. It was only a month into our marriage. So, he got burned and we called Dr. Sanders. He came down. We had no hospital or anything. I had to take care of him. I slept on the floor from November to March. He slept in the bed and I nursed him. First the doctor just completely covered him with what they call mertan. It kind of quit the burns but it made a layer kind of like leather. One night he said, "Ellen, I can't breathe, I can't breath." I jumped up off the floor and had the light on. The doctor had put the amertan and wrapped him in cloth. He was dying,

because poison was driving in him. I just got the scissors and cut the bandages and he just almost exploded. I called the doctor at three o'clock in the morning. He came down and sprayed him with amertan. I nursed him for five or six months. His skin looked just like black leather. The puss was forming in there, so I would have to pull that skin off and he would just scream. Tears would just roll down his face. And his arm had been burned really bad. I just stayed with him night and day. I hardly went anyplace. We were just living with our folks, hadn't bought our home yet. I was getting one from dad; he owned homes. We was waiting for the tenants to move out. Like I said that was from 20th December until March. Then when we got all that taken care of he said one night, "Ellen the beds wet." I got up and he'd gotten so badly burned on his arm that the skin had broken and he was bloody. Oh his arm was soaked clear down and it was just shooting out. I have quite big boobs and had a big brazier and I picked up my brazier and just whirled it around his chest and tied the end of it and made a tourniquet. I called the doctor again and he said, "How much blood." and I said, "A quart or two." And he said, "Ellen it couldn't be a quart or two or he'd be dead. I'll be down as fast as I can." He brought his wife, she was a nurse, Pricilla and Doctor Saunders. He came down and said I'd saved his life. I don't know how I had the presence of mind to make a tourniquet, but I did. Then, I had to take care of him after that. I'd have to feed him. I just slept on the floor on a blanket. It was March, and when he got up he had keloids, (scars). He was scarred from all those burns from here to his navel. This whole arm was wedged; he had keloids growing. I remember, I had to take him to Salt Lake every month for treatment. A machine they put him on would kill what ever was there. I had to have it because I had cancer on my neck, cancer under the skin. I had the lumps taken out of my neck. I had to go to Salt Lake. They put radiation on there and that's how my cancer was healed. But, I had two big lumps come in here and they were full of cancer cells. But I was able to take them out or I would have been dead. They gave me a pill that I said was a horse pill. I had to go to a doctor for six months. I'd have to make the trip every week to Salt Lake and he would only give me pills enough for the week.

So I've had my share on challenges. Then, one time I knew I didn't have my periods and the toilet would just be red with blood, so we went to the hospital. They took me out to St. Marks. They thought it was something in my uterus and it wasn't. So, he went in and found out that one kidney was cancerous. So, I had to have surgery. He (the doctor) went in and cut me from here clear around to my back. He went in and I can imagine him saying, "Look what I found in this lady." Because, they had me with this clear up under my chin and I couldn't be put clear out; I had to be relaxed so they could work with this. "A forty-two year old woman had a deformed baby kidney." That kidney had been deformed since birth. It was Dr. Palmer, a specialist. So, he was able to take the kidney out, but he scraped it and cleaned it and put it back in. Now, don't tell me how. I was in St. Marks for two weeks. Where they cut me I have scars from here to there. Finally after a week he said, "Ellen do you want to go home?" And I said, "Yes." And he said, "well you can't have any more morphine if you want to go home." When they'd give you morphine you'd go, "Oh it's so warm and so cuddly and you can go to sleep." He said, "You're getting addicted. No more morphine!" So I said, "Okay!" He said, "You got to get out of that bed, the morphine's taking you." He said, "You've been seven days with morphine and haven't been up." I said, "Okay, no more morphine after today." So he said, "You got to get up." And as I tried to walk it was just like somebody was tearing my body apart. I would just scream because the scars from the pit of my stomach clear around to my back. I didn't take another drop of morphine and I haven't had to. After about four days I worked it off. Then they finally let me go

home that far.

I came back to Dr. Palmer for about two years. They would catheterize me, and that hurts. I did that for about five or six months. He said, "Do you want to live?" And I said, "Yes!" And I did. Then they gave me those horse pills. He kept me coming back because he said, "Ellen, once you have cancer it can come back." But he died and I didn't follow it up and I haven't died yet and I'm ninety. And see that was at forty five when I had my surgery. Oh, I've had all kinds of things.

Elaine: But, you've overcome them and it sounds like you've helped the community a lot.

Ellen: I have. I'm the one that planted the planters on Main Street when I was the president of the Cultural Club. I planted them and for twelve years I watered them with buckets. You know the Teddy Park as you drive into town. I did the Teddy Park. I said, "Do you know, it's time Roosevelt has something." I'd been on a trip; I'd go someplace and they had the dogs; and I'd go someplace and they'd have humpty dumpty. Everybody had something that tied in with there community. I went to the city counsel and I said, "It's time we had something. I want something, and the only thing we got is Teddy Roosevelt." Gordon Harmston's great grandmother wrote to Teddy Roosevelt and ask if they could name Roosevelt after him. He wrote a letter and gave them permission. Viola Harmston, one of my older friends that taught me in school and got to like me quite well. When she was afraid she was going to die she gave me the letter that gave permission from Teddy Roosevelt with his signature and letter. He's personally written it himself to name this place Roosevelt. Before Viola Harmston died she gave the letter to me. Then when Gordy and Kaye got married, the ones that owns the Frontier Grill. I said I shouldn't have this. I'm the one that got it but I shouldn't have it. I gave it to them. Now if you could believe it, I said it the other day, "Kaye, you still got that?" She said, "Oh Ellen, I'm embarrassed, I never did dare tell you. I put it with some papers, sacred papers of ours down in a chest in the Frontier Grill and when we got flooded with water it was just demolished, so the letter is gone."

I raised \$1,600 and I went around and I asked everybody for \$500. I had \$1,200 left over and that's how I bought the flowers for awhile so I wouldn't have to pay for them. But, I watered the lawn up until I got mad at the city council. I used to cut the lawn, plant the flowers in the bucket and water the lawn. I got the little cement chairs. Some man got drunk and knocked two of them down. I did the monument. I had a man from Salt Lake come out and he done the monument and I raised the money. I had the names of the people that gave me \$500. I went around the town and gathered it myself. So then I went to the city and I said, "I'm not going to cut the lawn any more, I'm not going to water the flowers or anything else." I said, "I think you guys are a bunch of boobs up here and you can just do it yourself. And, I want to see that the flowers are watered and the streets swept." When I was on the council we bought a street sweeper. They hadn't had a street sweeper before. Half the time I have to go up and say the street sweeper hasn't been up. It makes me mad. People don't care. They really don't. They're so wrapped up in their own little selfish lives that they don't care. They'll throw there papers down and every time I go in Jubilee store I think, "Oh Lord, I wish I could wash the windows, oh I wish I could sweep this floor." I can't stand trash and garbage. I want everything clean and nice and shiny.

But, if I have offended people, I do it in a nice way.

Elaine: Is there anything else you would like to add about your life?

Ellen: I don't think there's a person in the world that's had a better life than I have. Oh I didn't tell you. I won a beauty queen contest once. There was a guy, Doc ____? ____, he was a dentist here with Dr. Warnick. They had two dentists. That's when we had Victory Park. They used to have dances there. He had a swimming pool in the back. In August he'd have a bathing beauty contest. When I was a sophomore I tried out but I didn't get anything. Then they begged me to try out again. When I was a senior I tried out. I won first place. I won the beauty contest. As I came out on the stage there were two men standing there behind the curtain. One of them said, "Well should I tell you who's going to be queen tonight?" The other man said, "Who?" He said, "Ellen Laris, those Greeks will soon own and take over the town."

That stigma was still there. My dad owned the Laris Motel as you came into Roosevelt. He built a home there and built five other homes. He opened the Laris Commission House, a grocery store and etc.

My mother went to church one day and she came home crying. I said, "What's the matter?"

"I'm never going back to church." She said, "We were talking about food and the teacher said, 'Well I'll tell you. A lot of people are fussy about food', but she said, 'the Greeks you can just give them cucumbers and meat and they're satisfied.' I'm not going to church again."

I said, "I am, they're not going to run me away." We do like cucumbers. But my dad liked wine once in awhile with the cucumbers too and that was his business. He would say to us kids, he would go to Colorado and pick up liquor and bring it here. He was a distributor for Bud Weiser liquor and beer. It was his vocation, he hauled things with his three trucks. So then he'd bring it here, you know, and my dad would put stuff right there and he'd say, "Now, I wouldn't want you to drink it. But, if you want it, will you please do it here in the house." He said, "Don't go out in the street if you want to take a glass of beer. Don't drink in public. You want to see what liquor tastes like, take a drop of it." But, he said, "Please don't make fools of yourself and never go out in public when you have a little drink. The Greeks have toddies for their colds. When you go to a Greek home, they'll bring you a little glass of Mistika, that's a woman's drink, or a little whiskey. It's just a little eye full. That's why we never drank because we had it at home. And, my mom and dad would have a glass of wine once in awhile. My dad finally gave that up.

And I don't think there's any person in the world that's had a better life than I have. I knew so much love in my home. There was no quarreling, no fighting, no jealousy. We were taught to love and appreciate and take care of what we had. We had family meals, morning noon and night. When the truck would come in my mother would say, "Hurry Ellen. Set the table. It's not quite ready, but if your dad sees the table set he'll know he's going to get something." I was taught that. We had three meals a day too.

I can go in a room that nobody knows anything about me. Isn't it embarrassing to go someplace and not know a soul. I'll sit there a few minutes and I'll say, "My name's Ellen Rawlings. How are you today?" I cannot sit in a room and have people just looking around and no one having the courage to speak up. I have too much. But it's helped me and it's helped my family, because I have a lot of them that need that initiative. But my dad would say, "You can do anything you make up your mind to do. And you can be what you want to be. If you'll show love and respect," he would say, "You'll get what you put into it."

Parley and I had two wonderful sons, Louis and Shirl Rawlings. Both have college degrees, served missions, and both taught school. Each son, Shirl and Louis, had five children.

Shirl retired and is a house painter by trade. Louis owns a State Farm Insurance office in Show

Low, Oregon,

My husband died in 1982 and I have never married (by choice). I continue to dance once a week at the Golden Age Center in Vernal. I started a sewing club in 1935. It's still going every Wednesday. We only stop two weeks for Christmas. I've sold two homes. I owned a store (The Attic). I now live in an apartment alone in Roosevelt.
I'm grateful for life, family, good health and friends.